



NASW

National Association of Social Workers / Connecticut Chapter

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*Testimony on H.B. 6355: An Act Concerning Risk Protection Orders Or Warrants
Judiciary Committee*

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The National Association of Social Workers, Connecticut Chapter (NASW/CT), representing over 2,300 members, supports H.B. 6355: An Act Concerning Risk Protection Orders Or Warrants with the expansion of eligible people who can notify the court and 180 day intervals.

In a 2017 study by Duke University, it was found that from 2009-2013, CT's Red Flag Law prevented at least one suicide for every 10-20 gun seizures. By expanding who can notify the court directly, there will be an even higher reduction in firearm suicides. NASW/CT and our members are greatly appreciative that licensed clinical social workers have been included in this expansion bill. It is especially important to note the addition of requesting an order to be accessible through paper copy and internet-based form with plain language for how to file, which will allow people to take action easily if needed. By expanding the accessibility and who in the family/directly works with individuals regarding their mental health/physical well-being/criminal offenses can notify the court, will only improve the noted statistic. It is imperative to include people who directly see the individual's functioning and mental health.

H.B. 6355 has provisions for removal of the protective order within a reasonable framework of 180 days that allows for the person to prove to the court that circumstances have changed to such a degree that the person is no longer a danger to self or others. The 180-day intervals allow for removal of the protective order, which is an improvement over the current law, while being lengthy enough to protect the public and the individual who is under the order. This allows a person to gain back their firearm(s) and ammunition sooner if they are able to prove they are no longer an immediate risk, or their protective order can be extended even longer than a year if they continue to be deemed unfit to regain possession. This addition both helps those that have received the help they needed and protects themselves and others if they have not yet received the help needed.

The state of Connecticut has a responsibility to take steps that work towards the safety of its residents – protecting residents from others who are presently unfit to possess a firearm and residents from their own selves. NASW/CT supports this bill and believes the additions and modifications will only make our state and residents safer.